

To: Crystal Lake Steering Committee

From: Nora Beck, Ricardo Lopez, and Kate Evasic; CMAP

Re: Outcomes of the Public Kick-off Open House, July 16, 2014.

Date: August 8, 2014

As one of the initial steps of the Crystal Lake Transportation Master Plan, a public kick-off open house was held on Wednesday, July 16 from 3 pm to 7 pm at Crystal Lake's City Hall. There were approximately 40 people in attendance, including several members of the steering committee. The following is a brief summary of the format and information gathered at the meeting.

1. Format

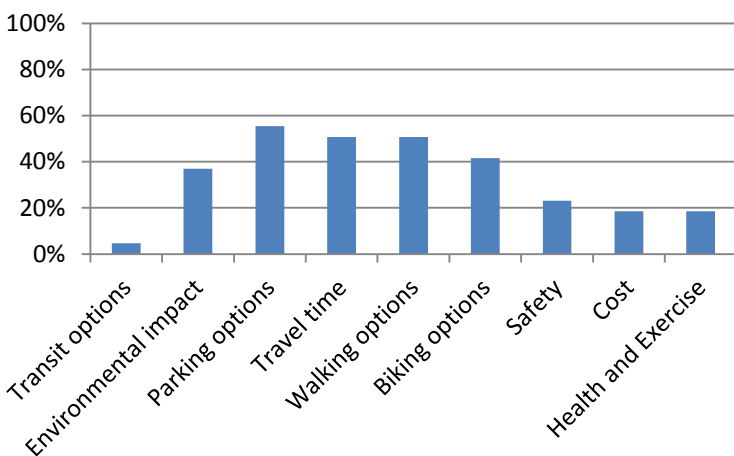
The open house was designed to solicit information on the strengths and challenges of the city's transportation system via different stations set up around the room. There were five posters for participants to visit. The first one asked participants their travel priorities and their use of different travel modes via a voting-type exercise. The next four posters presented maps of the community and asked participants to locate and describe specific problem areas or assets using a dot and post-it note activity. The four posters were devoted to four modes of transportation – driving, walking, biking, and taking transit. The last station used a PowerPoint presentation to display a visual preference survey. The presentation asked a series of questions about safety and preference coinciding with images of Crystal Lake or similar environments. Participants were asked to rate whether they felt safe on different streets as drivers, walkers, or bikers and if they had a preference for different streetscapes and amenities. Participants submitted their responses via a paper score sheet.

2. Results

a. Travel Priorities and preferences

Participants were asked a number of questions about their travel priorities and preferences. First, they were asked to report their top three considerations when determining how to travel in and around Crystal Lake (Figure 1). Overall, travel considerations were distributed among the options several of the options. Parking options, travel time, and walking options all scored high among meeting participants, while safety, cost, and health and exercise were chosen less frequently.

Figure 1. Top Travel Considerations



Participants were presented with two statements about each mode of transportation available in Crystal Lake and were asked their level of agreement on a 5-point scale. Responses above 3.0 (neutral) indicate general agreement among participants. For walking, participants somewhat disagreed with the statement that they feel safe as a pedestrian (average score of 2.9), yet expressed a desire to walk more than they do (average of 4.2), see Figure 2. For biking, participants generally disagreed with the statement that they feel safe as a bicyclist (2.4), yet strongly expressed a desire that they would like to bike more (4.7), see Figure 3. For transit, participants somewhat disagreed with the statement that transit is their preferred mode of transportation (2.8), yet expressed a desire to take transit more than they do (4.1), see Figure 4. It is important to note that the votes were distributed, with a fair sized contingent of people identifying transit as a preferred mode likely reflecting the Metra commuting population. For driving, participants disagreed with the statement that driving was their preferred mode of transportation (2.6), and overwhelmingly disagreed with the statement that they would like to drive more than they do currently (1.4), see Figure 5. In summary, participants would like to be walking, biking, and taking transit more than they do currently and drive less, but they have safety concerns (or potentially availability in terms of transit) that are preventing them from doing so.

Figure 2. Walking preferences

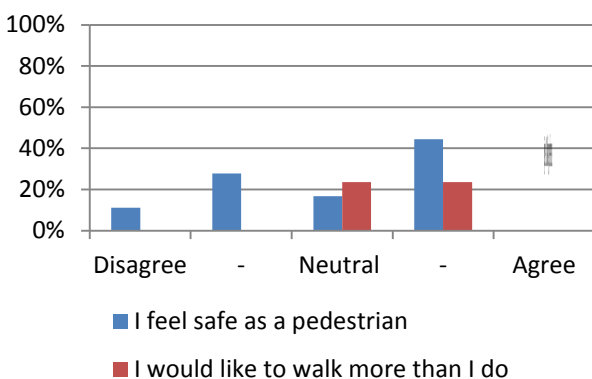


Figure 3. Bicycling preferences

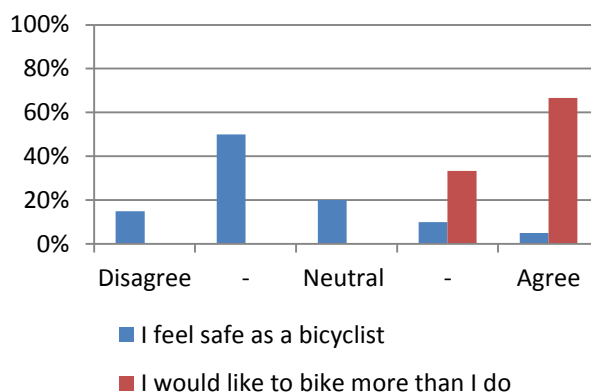


Figure 4. Transit preferences

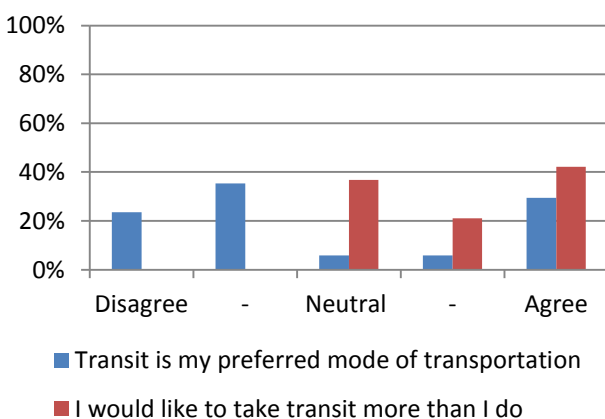
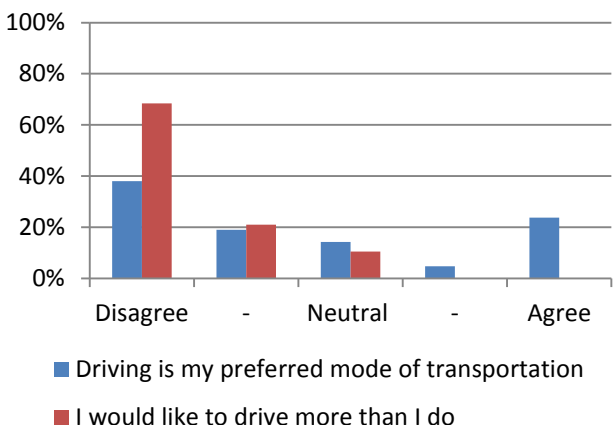


Figure 5. Driving preferences



On the back of the visual preference survey, participants were asked a number of questions about how they get around Crystal Lake. Figure 6 and 7 show which mode participants use to get around for work/school trips and all other trips. While driving solo remained the top choice between work-related trips and other trips, carpooling increased significantly for non-work-related trips. Interestingly, walking and biking were selected less frequently for other trips than for work-related trips. In addition, Metra was chosen consistently between the two options. These are unanticipated results, as one would think that if participants are walking and biking for work trips, this mode choice would also be reflected in non-work trips. No participant selected Pace bus as an option.

Figure 6. Mode choice for work / school trips

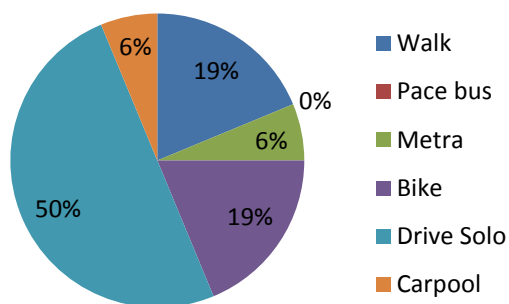
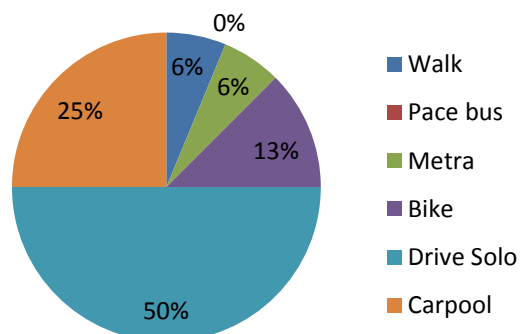


Figure 7. Mode choice for all other trips



b. Maps

Presented with four different maps – driving, walking, biking, and taking transit, participants were asked to identify areas that were performing well and areas in need of improvement. Using numbered red and green dots, participants were then prompted to provide further detail about the given location on a post-it note. Participants provided valuable information, which will be presented in a map format in the upcoming Existing Conditions Report.

Driving

Overall, participants identified no areas that were performing well and 28 problem areas. The comments were distributed between concerns about speeding and the need for traffic calming

measures, potential for extending streets to enhance the network and provide more direct routes, issues with specific intersections, and congested areas even during non-peak times. A number of other issues came up with some frequency, including widening and other improvement projects negatively impacting the character of a specific area; the need for roundabouts instead of traffic signals; and access management issues where the interaction of driveways and congested streets makes it difficult to access stores or private homes. No comments were made about the conditions of the roadway – such as pavement, lighting, or other visibility constraints.

Walking

Overall, participants identified 10 areas that were performing well and 31 problem areas. Participants expressed support for Veterans Acres and Three Oaks Recreation area as beautiful places to walk; they also identified specific sidewalk segments that are nice to walk along. The majority of problem area comments focused on three topics; the inability to cross a street and the corresponding need to add a crosswalk; the lack of a sidewalk during portions of an existing or potential walking route; and issues with automobile traffic not following the rules of the road. When discussing crosswalk improvements, most participants simply requested a crosswalk but many specifically requested pedestrian beacons that are only activated when a pedestrian is present. The specificity of the comments in this section is very detailed, revealing intimate knowledge with the surroundings that can be expected from a pedestrian perspective. Participants also noted errors in the CMAP dataset, correcting our data on which intersections had traffic signals.

Biking

Overall, participants identified 6 areas that were performing well and 38 problem areas. People expressed support for the existing bike lane and trail infrastructure. The majority of problem area comments focused on building connections between the existing components of the bike network, including entrances to existing off-street trails, extensions of the trail network, additional bike lanes and trails, and improvements to specific intersections that would make it easier to navigate while on a bicycle. Three comments focused on how they felt shared lanes (where markings on the road promote the sharing of a lane between bikes and cars) created unsafe conditions.

Taking Transit

This map received the fewest comments of the four maps. Participants identified 3 areas that were performing well and 9 problem areas. Participants identified specific Pace bus routes that were needed to serve MCC, LUREC, Route 14 shopping areas, Randall Road to Elgin, and a connection between the Indian Prairie Neighborhood and the Metra Stations. While existing bus service does exist to MCC, there seems to be a concern about the timing of this service.

c. Visual Preference Survey

The survey was composed of images of different street environments that are generally representative of street types found in Crystal Lake. The survey used a 5-point scale to ask participants their level of agreement with a safety question as well as their level of preference for different street conditions.

Driver Safety

The first 8 images asked participants if they felt safe as a driver in different street environments. The images (Figure 8) present the conditions with the top average scores. However, all images in this section

received an average score above 3.00 or neutral – meaning that participants generally felt safe in all the environments shown.

Figure 8. Driver Safety, images that made participants feel the safest as a driver.



Pedestrian Safety

The next 7 images asked participants if they felt safe as a pedestrian in different street environments. The images (Figure 9) present the conditions with the top average scores. Unlike in the driving portion of the survey, two images received average scores less than 3.0 or neutral – meaning that participants generally felt unsafe in these environments, see Figure 10. The conditions deemed safer by participants feature shorter crossing distances and up-to-date continental crosswalk markings. An image of a driveway with a wide turning radius interrupting a sidewalk was deemed unsafe by participants.

Figure 9. Pedestrian Safety, images that made participants feel the safest as a pedestrian.



Figure 10. Pedestrian Safety, images that made participants feel unsafe as a pedestrian.



Bicycle Safety

The next 6 images asked participants if they felt safe as a bicyclist in different street environments. Figure 11 present the images with the top average scores while Figure 12 present locations with a score of less than 3.0 or neutral – meaning that participants generally felt unsafe in these environments. Participants identified images featuring a clear separation from automobile traffic, either through

bollards, buffer striping, or, at the most extreme, an off-road trail as the safer set of environments. A standard bicycle lane immediately adjacent to parked cars or a residential street with no markings on the street surface were considered less safe.

Figure 11. Bicycle Safety, images that made participants feel the safest as a bicyclist.



Figure 12. Bicycle Safety, images that made participants feel less safe as a bicyclist.



Sidewalk Preference

The next 5 images presented an array of different sidewalk types representative of those found in Crystal Lake and asked participants how they liked them. Given the open nature of the question and the lack of corresponding comments, it is hard to exactly pinpoint why participants preferred some sidewalks over others. Figure 13 presents the images with the top average scores, with Williams Street sidewalks almost universally preferred among participants. There was one image that received an average score less than 3.0 or neutral – meaning that participants generally did not prefer this condition, see Figure 14. The predominant difference between the unpreferred sidewalk was its proximity to moving traffic (not separated by a landscaped parkway or parked cars) and its lack of established street trees.

Figure 13. Sidewalk Preference, images liked by most participants.



Figure 14. Sidewalk Preference, image disliked by most participants.



Parking Preference

The next 4 images presented an array of different parking scenarios representative of those found in Crystal Lake and asked participants how they liked them. The diagonal parking found on Williams Street (Figure 15) present received the top score, with one comment that diagonal back-in parking is preferred. There was one image – of parallel parking—that received an average score less than 3.0 or neutral – meaning that participants generally did not prefer this condition, see Figure 16. The remaining images of surface parking lots received scores that were slightly above neutral.

Figure 15. Parking Preference, image liked by most participants.



Figure 16. Parking Preference, image disliked by most participants.



Transit Preference

The next 6 images presented an array of different transit conditions representative of those found in Crystal Lake and asked participants how they liked them. Bus shelters, with or without the addition of real time bus locations, as well as the Crystal Lake Metra Station received the top scores (Figure 17). An image of a bus stop with no amenities received an average score less than 3.0 or neutral – meaning that participants generally did not prefer this condition, see Figure 18.

Figure 17. Transit Preference, images liked by most participants.



Figure 18. Transit Preference, images disliked by most participants.



3. General Comments

Participants were provided with general comment forms and we received 36 separate comments, see Table 1. In addition, facilitators took additional notes based on conversations with participants, see Table 2. The comments that are specific about locations will be incorporated in the overall map of comments in the existing conditions report.

Table 1. Comments left by participants

1	It would have been good to involve the Crystal Lake Clean Air Counts Committee in publicizing this input meeting. The committee is very concerned about transportation in the city. CAC should be involved in publicizing future meetings.
2	Every school should have bike lanes leading to them through the neighborhoods.
3	I really liked the visual preference, it really got me thinking about the different scenarios and I hope provides you with quality data.
4	Great job! Nice to see that you are gathering lots of public input. Also good to see that you are gathering input on all modes of transportation. I hope to see: UPNW upgrades; bus route from CL Metra Station to Elgin down Randall Road; more bike lanes throughout the community; land use conducive to public transit, biking and walking. Great job Crystal Lake staff and CMAP!
5	Need to slow down traffic on Bradford Lane - add speed limit and children at play signs on road.
6	Need to reduce traffic turning on Village then going down Bradford to Miller Rd to avoid traffic light at Randall and Miller.
7	Would like a bike/multi-use path between Indian Prairie Neighborhood and Prairie Path.
8	Would like bus service to train stations with times coordinated between buses and trains.
9	The City of Crystal Lake has for too long not given enough attention to the importance and superiority of the modern roundabout. Why? I suspect it has mostly to do with public opinion and leaders' unwillingness to do something that at first might be received with negative opinion. Answer? Do an education campaign that enables residents to assume some driver/cycling/pedestrian confidence before the modern roundabout is constructed. Please take a look at what Carmel, IN as well as Lincoln, Nebraska have achieved with respect to the modern roundabouts. Success! Thank you - A. Rosulek
10	Great job with biking in Crystal Lake. Keep it up!
11	I am very concerned with the continued widening of 176. Property values are being destroyed. Noise and air pollution is terrible. The fumes of cars stopped at the temporary light were awful. Veterans Acres Park and pond are impacted. Litter and noise affects animals and breeding cycle - water runoff from both widened roads go right into pond. Water from 176 goes right into my front door!!

12	Walkup Road needs to be opened by the high school. It is one of the reasons it's hard to get around. Someone could die waiting for an ambulance or getting to emergency care by having to detour around Walkup. It's time to be fair to the whole city and not just a privileged few.
13	The bike improvements of the last few years are great. We could use a lot more though. I cycle over 50 miles a week and am only moderately comfortable biking in Crystal Lake. I travel a lot, even having bikes in two other large cities. I feel more comfortable biking in those as there are more bike lanes, trails, and routes.
14	As someone who has lived as an adult here for 20 years, I don't understand why Walkup does not connect to be a through street. It would relieve congestion and make things much more manageable around the high school when school is starting and letting out.
15	I'd like to see better traffic light timing for traffic flow along 14. Most people are on it simply to get through town and it's a painful and slow trek.
16	Please don't take down anymore trees, period. Thank you!
17	Please make sure that everyone - especially businesses - always shovel.
18	I consider safety when arriving on late train. It would help to have a police present at the station at midnight.
19	Extend Rakow Road directly west to McHenry Ave perhaps joining the street directly north for one or two blocks
20	Extend North Shore Drive directly in Crystal Lake Ave. Then, abandon the present south leg into Route 14. It would be much more direct, convenient and safe to enter 14 at a light.
21	Provide a direct access to Lippold Park walking trail from the most easterly part of North Shore Drive near Woodland Drive area - a walking trail only for the many walkers in the area. - Bill Franz
22	I currently live on 176 and never feel safe crossing 176. Why can't police monitor 176 and give out speeding tickets? Speed limits of 30 mph are never kept.
23	I also live on 176 and it needs pedestrian activated crosswalks at the intersections with Main Street, 2nd Street, and the bike path crossing.
24	The city needs to enforce the pedestrian crosswalks with the new caution light. Vehicles ignore them.
25	It would be a good idea for the City to provide a tri-fold for cyclist to use to find bike routes. Some cities offer such maps for visitors and citizens. Makes the city user friendly. Maybe (symbolize) routes for families versus the road bikers with a way to gauge distance.
26	Bikers do not obey rules of the road regularly.
27	Would like to see bikes allowed on buses.
28	Marginalized population to work, hospital, education
29	Why don't we have an early train on Sunday? Must other lines have a 7:00 am Sunday train?
30	No bus service on Randall Road down to Algonquin stores.
31	I would add transit service from the Metra South down Randall with stops at major shopping points.
32	With the influx of latinos, you may capture the people who don't own autos.
33	I personally am not aware of transit, besides Pace or a taxi that can get be to the train, downtown or across town.
34	A bus route would be useful between downtown Crystal Lake and along Route 14 for shopping, possibly to the two beaches and Veterans Acres.
35	There are not many east-west roads, Crystal Lake Avenue and 176 are the only ones, and Crystal Lake Avenue is a heavily traveled truck route.
36	Put sidewalks along every street. Make it possible to walk from Crystal Lake Ave to Congress Parkway (post office). Improve crossing to post office.

Table 2. Facilitator notes reflecting discussions with participants.

1	Concerns that people were not notified of the meeting until they saw it in the newspaper
2	How long has this been going on before people were notified
3	More buses, more cabs; need transportation for disabled and seniors
4	Randall Road and the frontage roads; would like the city to oppose this project
5	Questioning regional population forecasts and how it will influence the transportation plan. Last CMAP projection (GO TO 2040) has 3% growth; yet population peaked in 2006. CMAP was still projecting growth higher than 1980s. Doesn't want it used to support building big road projects. Need to do an economic analysis.
6	Rakow Road bridge too steep
7	Look at SRA map, where are these routes
8	McHenry County 2040 Transportation plan; concerns about houses on Route 176 being removed with potential widening of this roadway.
9	Crosswalk at 2 nd Street and Route 176 is a problem, people are getting hit.
10	Issues with stormwater on Route 176
11	Questioning the need to widen Main Street for a right turn lane onto Terra Cotta Avenue.
12	Main and Walkup extension; extend Walkup or walkup extension through Hill Drive
13	Not happy with tree removal on Walkup

4. Participant Demographics

Basic demographic information – age, gender, and race/ethnicity –was requested from meeting attendees to get a sense of how representative the group was of the Crystal Lake community. Only 14 attendees responded to the demographic questions. Overall, the meeting attendees were older, composed of more women, and more identified as White than the community at large.